

Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of Sept 27, 2020
Five Things You Should Know About God: God is Holy & Just
Pastor Temple, 10:30am, see Christchurchsl.org/sermons

Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15 min)

- Anything to share about personal events or faith experiences since you last met?
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

Opening Discussion Question: Eternal, unchanging, and all-knowing; these are characteristics of God we have been thinking about over the last two Sundays. What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word “holy?” Does it involve doing certain things, not doing certain things, a mix of both or something else?

Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the scriptures from this week’s sermon message (see www.christchurchsl.org/sermons) and then discuss the questions which follow as time allows.

1 Peter 1:13-16

¹³Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Leviticus 11:44-45

⁴⁴I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. ⁴⁵I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

Matthew 4:48

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Revelation 15:4 Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

Numbers 4:15

¹⁵“After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, only then are the Kohathites to come and do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things or they will die. The Kohathites are to carry those things that are in the tent of meeting.

- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?
- Pastor Temple said the word for holy, *hagios* in the New Testament and *Qodesh* in the Old Testament, appears over 600 times in the Bible and means to be separate or different from the world or to have no rivals or competition. Rudolph Otto described this *transcendent* quality of God as being the “Wholly Other” or entirely different from all else we experience in ordinary life. How does knowing about or encountering God’s holiness impact our relationship with Him?
- In Isaiah’s vision of heavenly worship (Isaiah 6:1-5) why do you think there were angels (seraphim) calling out “holy, holy, holy?”
- How do you explain Isaiah’s response in verse 5?
- In the numbers passage above, the Israelites were taught to treat God’s holiness and the Ark of the Covenant with great care and precision in worship and with special instructions when movement was necessary. Why do you think God said only certain people could move the Ark and would be risking death if they touched it?
- What do you think the effect on the community was when David had the Ark of the Covenant put on an ox-cart and a man, Uzzah, tried to steady it when it was falling off and dropped dead?
- The first three scriptures listed above offer the commands to be holy or perfect as God is holy or perfect. What do you think are meant by these commands?
- The 1st Peter passage says “do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.” How does knowing the holiness of God help God’s people discern between good and evil desires?
- How do you respond to Billy Graham’s statement that “only when we understand the holiness of God will we understand the depth of our sin.”?

Other Related Readings (10 min)

- The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines God as “a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.” In what ways would God, as described here, be different if the word “holiness” were removed from the definition?
- Would a volunteer with a Bible please read aloud Ezekiel 36:18-28.
- When God’s people lived in exile from their homeland, they understood that their sins of idolatry and disrespecting the holiness of God had caught up with them. In verses 18-21, the Lord expressed concern over the holiness of His name that had been profaned among the nations. What does it mean to profane the name of the Lord or to keep the name of the Lord holy today?
- In verses 22-24, it is out of concern for His name among the nations that God announces He will bring back His people into their land and show Himself holy through His people before the eyes of the nations. How are we to understand God’s holiness as part of the mission of God’s people?
- In verses 25-28, how does the Lord describe His plans to bring resolution to His wayward people?
- How were the people to succeed in following God’s laws where they had failed before?
- How do you believe these verses might be pointing to Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant as well as the more immediate return from the exile?
- How has the holiness of God come closer to us in Christ?

Personalizing and Applying The Message (10 min)

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the scripture readings above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- How would you describe the Christian concept of holy living? What are some practical examples?

- John Wesley defended the doctrine of perfection or sanctifying grace by claiming it must be possible or our Lord would not have commanded it. Do you believe being made perfect in holy love by the grace of God is possible? Why or why not?
- What would you say is necessarily involved in truly seeking to be holy as God is holy?

Witness and Closing (5 minutes)

- How has the conversation today further shaped your sense of responsibility for representing the true nature of God to the world?
- What positive aspects of our personal witness for Christ could we gain this week, or what negative aspects of our witness we could lose?
- Have you thought about registering for the church wide weekend of service projects called “Change the World” that is this weekend? See <https://www.christchurchsl.org/event/change-the-world-2020/>
- A volunteer may conclude by leading the group in prayer about the joys and concerns shared earlier in the meeting.